The Brown Pelican

The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 32 No 11 November 2026

Annual Meeting
Thursday 19 November 2026 7:00 p.m.
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont

1. **Elections**
2. **Your Favorite Bird Pictures**

Dr. Harlan Stewart has again volunteered to prepare all photos submitted in advance into a Powerpoint presentation. The contributors of the pictures will be encouraged to talk briefly about their pictures telling where they were taken etc. Contributions should be no more than about 10 pictures. The pictures must be bird or bird habitat related and should have been taken in the last two years, but do not need to be exhibition quality, especially if the subject is especially interesting for any reason.

In order to prepare a combined presentation, we will need to have the pictures by Monday morning November 14. They can be emailed as attachments to Harlan at hstewartmail@gt.rr.com; If necessary, send several separate emails. The pictures can to compressed to about 50 percent of original to reduce the number of emails needed. We much prefer advance submission, and, depending on how many are submitted, we might not have time to show many or even any that are not submitted in advance. Adding pictures on the evening of the program means we cannot move from one contributor to the next smoothly. Please come early to work out any kinks if you want to do anything other than show still pictures/Powerpoint and talk about them.

We plan to have the doors open no later than 6:00 p.m., and have light refreshments available by about 6:15 p.m.

Delivery of the *Brown Pelican*

Most of you now receive the *Brown Pelican* as a pdf file attached to an email. Others receive printed copies mailed to you by US mail. We want to encourage you to select email as your preference. Not only are postage costs increasing sharply, but preparing copies for mailing also takes significant volunteer time. Only very rarely does a mailed copy reach you in less than four days. Thanks to Jeff Pittman's work, our web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org has been completely revamped, and the current and past issues of *the Brown Pelican* are available there with minimal delay.

The Brown Pelican
Vol. 32, No.11 November 2026

Issue number 333

Golden Triangle
Audubon Society

Web Site for more information
www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

Board of Directors (2026)

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The Brown Pelican is published monthly except July by the Golden Triangle Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292
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Calendar of Events

Important Note: Field Trip notices published here are subject to last minute changes. Changes will always be posted on the web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org.

Future Programs and Field Trips. Always check the website goldentriangleaudubon.org for possible changes.

Thursday November 19, 2026 Annual Meeting and Elections

The Annual Meeting of Golden Triangle Audubon Society will take place on November 19, 2026 in the Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont, Texas. At this meeting, we will hold elections for all Officer positions and all At-Large Board positions. To nominate someone for any position contact the chair of the Nominating Committee. Steve Mayes. Please in the first instance email him at gtaudubon@aol.com. Nominations from the floor will be in order but must be accompanied by affirmation, either orally at the meeting or in writing, that the candidate is willing to serve.

We are also always seeking contributions to the running of the Society in the form of new volunteers, as we must have new blood, and especially younger blood! If necessary, we will be happy to arrange for you to act as an understudy to an existing volunteer for a year (or two) if necessary.

We do not meet in December. We do not yet have details of the various area Christmas Counts, but we will as soon as possible post the dates and details on the website. at www.GoldenTriangleAudubon.org. The count period runs Dec14th to Jan 5th

Golden Triangle Audubon Facebook

Join us on Facebook! There is a Golden Triangle Audubon group on Facebook, moderated by Phuong Conway, John Mariani and Jana Whittle. Our aim is to provide a space for people around the Golden Triangle to share pictures, sightings, and other information about birds, other nature, and local birding sites and habitats. All levels of pictures are welcome, especially of less common birds. If you are looking for help with identification, please include the location and date of the picture, as both are important in narrowing the possibilities. Send your contribution through a Facebook message or an email to gtaudubon@aol.com

Membership Dues

To simplify our record keeping, all memberships now run from January through December. Membership dues are $20 per year. We are now accepting 2027 dues. You may pay at any membership meeting (checks preferred) or use the subscription/membership blank on the back page. Dues paid in September will cover through the end of 2027.

For new members joining National Audubon on line and selecting our Chapter code (W25), we receive a rebate of the entire first year's national dues, and no Chapter dues are expected for that first year.

As a reminder, dues are voluntary for National Audubon Society (NAS) members living in the Chapter's official territory, which is defined by zip codes, but covers all of Jefferson, Orange and Hardin Counties and one or two zip codes adjacent to these counties. We do also welcome NAS members in other nearby counties although their membership in NAS does not bring them to our attention.

We would very much encourage you receive the *Brown Pelican* electronically as this saves paper, cost (including ever increasing postal costs) and volunteer time. To start that, simply send an email to gtaudubon@aol.com from the address you want us to use.

EarthShare Texas

EarthShare of Texas represents Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society in payroll contribution programs in workplaces throughout Texas. For more information about how you can support Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society at your workplace, call 1-800-GREENTX, or visit www.earthshare-texas.org.

Orange County Corps of Engineers Levee Project

The Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – Galveston District – held a show-and-tell meeting Oct. 20 in Bridge City to update the public and solicit comments on the revised alignment and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Orange County Storm Risk Management and Ecosystem Protection project now planned for completion in 2033. The project is a system of earthen levees, floodwalls, pump-stations, navigable gates and other features to protect Orange County from storm surge and coincident heavy rain (like Ike and Harvey). The meeting was very well attended, with about 100 people and a full parking lot at the Bridge City Community Center.

While detailed maps were not presented at the Bridge City meeting, the revised alignment of the levee and pump system around Orange County increases the surge-protected area and funding for fish and wildlife impact mitigations was substantially increased. Total cost figures are $2-7 billion, so there are a few more questions to understand the various estimates. Bridge City, Orange and Orange County officials are strongly backing the project, though the local portion of funding must be provided by the Gulf Coast Protection District. The comment period closed Oct. 26 and the project's next approval milestone is in Sept. 2027.

USACE personnel at the meeting were out in force to answer questions and gather comments. Many questions were referred to the USACE website for the project, including the Supplemental EIS, at https://www.swg.usace.army.mil/S2G/OrangeCounty in the Public Notices category.

Gary Kelley

October Program Report

The October Program (October 15) was a wonderful meeting. Port Arthur Convention and Visitors Bureau provided delicious sandwiches, wraps, chips, dips, and cookies. Thank you very much.

Nathaniel Cooley, presented a great presentation about the Corpus Christi Hawk Watch. He is one of several official Hawk counters there. This is his third fall to work there. His second year working there he saw 250,000 hawks fly over in one day. He finds hawk watching a joy and has done it for over 1,000 hours. The hawk watch in Corpus Christi began in 1997. More hawks are counted there between August 1st until November 15th than any other hawk watch in North America. Each year between 600,000 to 1,000,000 have been seen. Twenty-six Hawk species have been seen there.

The numbers of hawks seen in Corpus Christi is higher than many other places because the hawks funnel from two fall migration pathways through the Texas Coastal Bend and on to Mexico, Central and South America. They funnel from both the North migration pathway along the northern shore of Lake Erie through the Detroit River area just south of Detroit avoiding crossing the Lake itself, (where there are no thermals to assist the hawks) and from the Northeast pathway along the Appalachian chain.

The Corpus Christi Hawk Watch is held for 8 hours each day on a huge platform in Hazel Bazemore County Park, the largest county park in that area. The watch began in 1997. Most of the Broad-winged Hawks breed in the boreal forests of the northern US and southern Canada. Swainson's Hawks migrate the farthest. They fly 6,000 miles one way mostly to the Pampas region of Argentina. Nathaniel spoke about thermals which are rising warm air currents and they allow the hawks to rise and soar without using too much energy.

Hawk counts are extremely important. They are credited in determining that numbers of hawk species are stable. People of all ages come to the Hawk watch. The last week of September is generally when the largest numbers of hawks come through the Corpus Christi area. That is also when the Celebration of Flight occurs. Broad-winged Hawks make up at least 88 percent of the hawks seen there.

In 2026, as of October 15th, the Corpus Christi Hawk Watch had tallied 587,131 hawks that flew over including at least 21 different species this year so far. For comparison, the Smith Point Hawk Watch, which typically sees only hawks from the Northeast, had seen 19,738 hawks fly over including 15 species.

We thank the thirty people who came to the meeting. We thank Dania Sanchez for asking counters from the Corpus Christi Hawk Watch to do this presentation.

Jana Whittle

American Robins in Southeast Texas

For at least 30 years, we have come to expect American Robins to be visible in numbers in Southeast Texas in February each year as they pass through heading north to breed. Analyzing their movements is, unfortunately made more difficult because here are so many of them and they are very visible in urban areas! eBird is a very valuable tool, but as the number of participants increases, and the number of reported sightings correspondingly, it is difficult and somewhat tedious (but not impossible) to do much statistically valid analysis. So, the comments below are more opinion and anecdotal than factual.

There are robins in selected parts of Southeast Texas year-round. The numbers vary considerably depending on the time of year. the numbers each winter particularly. In recent years, Nederland (and some residential areas on the fringes of that and other mid-county cities) and extreme northeast Jefferson County have been favored breeding locations for the relatively small numbers of the species that do bred here. For northbound passage migrants, February is the month when they are most likely to be seen in flocks, on any manicured grassy area where they typically seek worms.

In the last few days of October this year, suddenly, a significant number of robins appeared on lawns in mid-county (and elsewhere locally?) How widespread this occurrence was and how prolonged it will be remains to be seen, but it is an interesting development. It could be a single year event based on the somewhat unusual weather patterns in the traditional migration pathways and probably also in the northern parts of the wintering grounds. Unfortunately, participation in eBird south of the US border is very limited, so a complete picture of wintering robins is not available.

John Whittle

Field Trip to Sabine Woods – 17 October 2026

The October field trip of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society has traditionally been to Sabine Woods. October is something of an in between time for birds on the upper Texas coast. It's past the peak time for many land bird migrants but before the arrival of many wintering waterbirds and raptors. There is not one logical place to pick for a field trip in October. So, why not pick one of the best birding spots in the country and hope for the best? That is the strategy for this trip and it proved to be a good one for this year's trip. This year's mid-fall has been dominated by unusually warm and settled weather, but as this was the first fall Sabine Woods Field Trip we have held in October, it is difficult to know what is normal

The changing of the seasons was obvious right from the start with a calling Eastern Wood-Pewee representing the waning fall migrants and the numerous active Eastern Phoebes representing the arriving winter residents. A few Ruby-throated Hummingbirds still zipped around the oaks but most would continue on to Latin America within the next week or two. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers lined the wires along the highway outside of the woods along with a newly arrived American Kestrel. Three Crested Caracaras and a good collection of Black Vultures also waited along the highway at the edge of a woods looking for the opportunity to dine on a pig carcass on the side of the road. The resident woodpeckers (Downy and Red-bellied) were easily located but a wintering Northern Flicker and several Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers gave a nice preview of winter. The ubiquitous winter song birds of Sabine Woods, the Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, were already on full display. A few late Broad-winged Hawks were spotted and a young Red-shouldered Hawk was periodically seen.

Other wintering species were beginning to make themselves home at Sabine Woods as well. A Blue-headed Vireo was a welcome find and there will likely be a few around the woods all winter. A White-eyed Vireo was also located on the trip. Although this species does winter in the area, it is usually farther inland and this bird was likely just passing through while heading further south. Northern House Wrens (recently split from their South American cousins) were noisy but still cryptic as is usual for these birds. A couple of Hermit Thrushes were seen and heard giving their "chuck" calls several times on the trip. The Gray Catbirds seen could be winterers or passage migrants. Gray Catbirds may be found at Sabine Woods in any month (at least some years) so one can never be sure exactly what they are up to. At least some of the Brown Thrashers found will likely winter at the woods. Northern Harriers cruised over the nearby fields and marshes where they will be a fixture for the next few months.

But it is not quire winter yet! Migrants were still easily found at Sabine Woods and fall can be a great time to see them. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo sat obviously in a willow tree while a Rose-breasted Grosbeak was a bit harder to spot as it moved through the dense oaks. Barn Swallows zipped overhead while a Summer Tanager called from a nearby tree. A Blue Grosbeak was spotted by some birders while Indigo Buntings were a bit easier as they called from the high grass. A flock of Dowitchers flew over just to show that Sabine Woods has more than just migrant song birds!

Sabine Woods is, of course, best known for migrant warblers and this trip provided a nice fall selection. Yellow-rumped Warblers arrived in southeast Texas where they will be the most numerous wintering warbler by far but a resident/wintering Common Yellowthroat was also found. A couple of greenish-yellowish Tennessee Warblers appeared for the birders while a single Northern Parula was seen high in the trees. American Redstarts and Magnolia Warblers are among the most common migrant warblers in the fall at Sabine Woods and they were both easily found on this trip. A Nashville Warbler was seen by some of the birders, this is one of the few warbler species (along with Canada, Mourning and Wilson's) that is more easily found in the fall than in the spring. Two of the best warblers of the day bookended the trip for the birders. The day started with a beautiful Blackburnian Warbler working the outside of one of the oaks, hunting for insects as the morning sun woke them up. This is a welcome sight at any time but they are not as easy in the fall as they are in the spring. The last warbler species seen on the day was a Palm Warbler foraging along the ground near Howard's water feature. This species winters in small number in the area but is not always easy to find in migration.

Whether you wanted winter birds or migrants, Sabine Woods in October has plenty to offer the birders on this trip. For those who only know this Texas Ornithological Society sanctuary in the spring, they might be surprised by how good it can be in the fall. The warbler counts may tend to be a little lower, the bugs a little tougher and some of the species a bit harder to identify but that is part of the challenge. And considering species like Painted Redstart and Red-legged Honeycreeper have turned up at Sabine Woods in the fall, all birders should be ready for a fall trip to Sabine Woods!

The following species were recorded by the trip leaders:
White-winged Dove (3); Mourning Dove (1); Yellow-billed Cuckoo (1); Ruby-throated Hummingbird (12); Short-billed/Long-billed Dowitcher (25); Neotropic Cormorant (3); White Ibis (15); White-faced Ibis (3); Great Egret (1); Black Vulture (35); Turkey Vulture (1); Osprey (1); Northern Harrier (3); Broad-winged Hawk (2); Red-shouldered Hawk (1); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (5); Red-bellied Woodpecker (1); Downy Woodpecker (4); Northern Flicker (1); Crested Caracara (3); American Kestrel (1); Eastern Wood-Pewee (1); Eastern Phoebe (6); Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (8); White-eyed Vireo (1); Blue-headed Vireo (1); Blue Jay (8); Carolina Chickadee (1); Barn Swallow (5); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (15); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (15); Northern House Wren (3); Marsh Wren (1); Gray Catbird (2); Brown Thrasher (2); Hermit Thrush (2); Red-winged Blackbird (15); Tennessee Warbler (2); Nashville Warbler (1); Common Yellowthroat (1); American Redstart (2); Northern Parula (1); Magnolia Warbler (4); Blackburnian Warbler (1); Palm Warbler (1); Yellow-rumped Warbler (18); Black-throated Green Warbler (2); Summer Tanager (1); Northern Cardinal (3); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (1); Blue Grosbeak (1); Indigo Bunting (3).

Steve Mayes

"Migration Count" 10 October 2026

This year, for what we traditionally called the "Fall Migration Count," we changed from using the third Saturday in September that we had used since 1996 to the second Saturday in October, which has become well established and is now identified as "International Migratory Bird Day." Apart from the desire to standardize on a day used for a "migration count" in the "western" areas of the northern hemisphere (using geopolitical rather than compass meanings of the terms), we had concerns that the day we were previously using was too early in the migration pattern in that only a few of the classical migratory species, not necessarily warblers only, passed through the Texas coast so early. That day usually produced only a few of the passerine/landbird species that most western hemisphere birders typically seek. This year, the 12 warbler species that were seen, almost all of them "true" migrants, detected in Sabine Woods and elsewhere along the coast, certainly was a respectable number of warblers. That number of warblers can be considered similar to the number of species that we typically counted on the September counts. One should never use the results of a single count of birds for any analysis. Probably ten years of counts would be an absolute minimum to use for that purpose. That was the single biggest drawback to changing the date of a count that had been conducted, hurricanes permitting, for 30 years.

Nevertheless, we should, even at this early stage in the history of a count at a specific location, place some factors on the record. For any single bird count, unquestionably the first factor to look at is the weather. In this case, not just the weather conditions on the Texas coast on the day and the day before, which are easily evaluated, but the fall weather on the migration paths from the breeding (and post-breeding dispersal) areas, which differ from species to species, to the Texas coast, a span up to 1,500 or more miles and are thus not easy to evaluate. The fall season this year has been characterized so far by mostly dry and relatively warm conditions, but the strong El Niño that is developing, typically will affect December, January and February most, and will supposedly bring wetter and cooler than normal conditions in that time period, which will be too late to significantly affect passerine migratory species.

Although we have no real one-day blitz data for the whole of Jefferson County to compare to, we do express surprise that only about 125 species were detected compared to around 150 that was normal on the previous September dates. In our review, we have been unable to identify any single group or small number of groups of species that are "missing." We are not really too surprised that most shorebirds that migrate south for the winter had already left, while not all had left before the previous September date. Nor are we surprised that the count was too early to find a significant number of waterfowl species, just the two resident Whistling-Duck species, Mottled Ducks and the Blue-winged Teal; some of the last mentioned spend the winter locally at a few favored coastal locations. We are surprised that there were not even any early arrivals of the classic Southeast Texas waterfowl species such as Gadwall, Green-winged Teal and Northern Shoveler.

Certainly, we can point to much smaller numbers of flycatchers on the later date. And also, that it was apparently too early for many of the wintering sparrows to have arrived. The dry conditions in September (and October) likely reduced the insect populations and quite likely led to a seed crop of lower bulk and number and lower nutritional content.

A question that is typically asked about any form of count affecting landbird migrants is how many warbler species were seen. Somewhat paradoxically, the number was very similar to the number detected on counts on the old September dates, typically around 15. Of course, it is a different set of warblers. Most of the later migrating birds have had time to raise two clutches, and so later in the fall, a higher proportion of the birds are immature birds of the year. You might be forgiven for thinking that such species should thus increase in population faster than the earlier migrating species. I don't know of any evidence that this in fact happens. Several factors may be at work. The earlier migrating birds will tend to be stronger by the time winter arrives. There may be less competition for food and habitat. On the other hand, they may be more vulnerable to predation by hawks as there are fewer of them.

One-hundred-and-twenty-four species (preliminary count) were recorded by 13 counters in Jefferson County 10 Oct 2026
WHISTLING-DUCK, Black-bellied (88); WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous (5); TEAL, Blue-winged (94); DUCK, Mottled (8); GREBE, Pied-billed (3); PIGEON, Rock (151); COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian. (11); DOVE, Inca (3); DOVE, White-winged (45); DOVE, Mourning (105); HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-throated. (8); HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous (1); RAIL, King (1); RAIL, Clapper (21); RAIL, King/Clapper (3); SORA (5); GALLINULE, Common (107); STILT, Black-necked (11); AVOCET, American (3); PLOVER, Black-bellied (10); KILLDEER (50); PLOVER, Semipalmated (9); PLOVER, Piping (6); PLOVER, Snowy (1); WHIMBREL, Hudsonian (1); DOWITCHER, Species (1); SANDPIPER, Spotted (1);YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (8); WILLET (31); YELLOWLEGS, Greater (7); TURNSTONE, Ruddy (2); SANDPIPER, Stilt (2); SANDERLING (23); SANDPIPER, Least (5); SANDPIPER, Western (5); SANDPIPER, Peep species (21); GULL, Laughing (1900); GULL, Ring-billed (3); GULL, American Herring (101); GULL, Species (109); TERN, Caspian (1); TERN, Forster's (8); TERN, Common (2); TERN, Royal (22); FRIGATEBIRD, Magnificent (1); ANHINGA (2); CORMORANT, Double-crested. (17); CORMORANT, Neotropic (63); CORMORANT, species (30); IBIS, White (186); IBIS, Glossy (5); IBIS, White-faced (68); SPOONBILL, Roseate (14); BITTERN, Least (2); NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-crowned (1); NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned. (4); HERON, Little Blue (14); HERON, Tricolored (11); EGRET, Reddish (2); EGRET, Snowy (39); HERON, Green (3); EGRET, Western-Cattle (886); EGRET, Great (80); HERON, Great Blue (33); PELICAN, Brown (69); VULTURE, Black (107); VULTURE, Turkey (38); OSPREY (24); HAWK, White-tailed (5); HAWK, Sharp-shinned (2); HARRIER, Northern (4); HAWK, Red-shouldered (8); HAWK, Broad-winged (1); HAWK, Swainson's (12); Red-tailed (5); OWL, American Barn (1); OWL, Great Horned (1); KINGFISHER, Belted (19); WOODPECKER, Red-headed (1); WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (38); WOODPECKER, Downy (16); WOODPECKER, Pileated (1); FLICKER, Northern (1); CARACARA, Crested (10); KESTREL, American (62); MERLIN (6); FALCON, Peregrine (2); WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern (2); FLYCATCHER, Empidonax (1); PHOEBE, Eastern (22); FLYCATCHER, Vermilion (1); FLYCATCHER, Great. Crested (1); KINGBIRD, Western (1); KINGBIRD, Eastern (10); FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tailed (19);; VIREO, White-eyed (9); VIREO, Yellow-throated

(1); VIREO, Philadelphia (1); SHRIKE, Loggerhead (39); JAY, Blue (61); CROW, American (37); CROW, Fish (5); CROW, Species (7); CHICKADEE, Carolina (17); TITMOUSE, Tufted (17); SWALLOW, Tree (7); SWALLOW, N Rough-winged (14); SWALLOW, Barn (102); SWALLOW, Cliff/Cave (43); KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (10); NUTHATCH, Brown-headed (1+); NUTHATCH, Red-breasted (1); GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (23); HOUSE-WREN, Northern (2); WREN, Carolina (17); STARLING, European (135); CATBIRD, Gray (5); THRASHER, Brown (7); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (117); BLUEBIRD, Eastern (3); THRUSH, Swainson's (2); ROBIN, American (1); SPARROW, House (mult); FINCH, House (19); SPARROW, Seaside (13); SPARROW, Savannah (6); SPARROW, Song (2); SPARROW, Lincoln's (1); MEADOWLARK, Eastern (35); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (mult); COWBIRD, Brown-headed (901); GRACKLE, Common (209); GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (109); GRACKLE, Great-tailed (1075); WATERTHRUSH, Northern (2); WARBLER, Black-and-white. (3); WARBLER, Tennessee (6); WARBLER, Nashville (2); YELLOWTHROAT, Common. (14); REDSTART, American (14); PARULA, Northern (5); WARBLER, Magnolia (6); WARBLER, Blackburnian (1); WARBLER, Northern Yellow (1); WARBLER, Palm (1); WARBLER, Pine (3); WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (2); WARBLER, Yellow-throated (1); WARBLER, Black-throated Green (2); WARBLER, Wilson's (2); TANAGER, Summer (3); TANAGER, Western (1); CARDINAL, Northern (26); GROSBEAK, Rose-breasted (1); GROSBEAK, Blue (3); BUNTING, Indigo (26); BUNTING, Painted (1)

Number of species (124); Number of Observers (13); Number of Parties (10); Number of Party-hours (48.6); Party hours on foo (7.4); Miles on foot (1.7); Party-hours by automobile (41.1); Miles by automobile (276.3); Party-hours stationary (0.25);

Observers; Michael Cooper, Sherry Gibson, Thomas Hellweg, Greg Jackson, Denise and Gary Kelley, Kenyan Guidry, Steve Mayes, Christine Sliva, Harlan Stewart, Liz Timmer, Jana and John Whittle. Checklists entered on eBird by the following were reviewed for additional species and higher numbers of any species: Kerri Guidry, Joellen and Brian Peters, Kevin Sitton. A Chestnut-sided Warbler was orally reported by two separate observers who did not, however, enter checklists into eBird.

Bird Sightings –October 2026

For this column, we review, looking for rare and very rare species, all credible eBird and other records reported to us from nearby Texas counties – Angelina, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Newton, Orange, Sabine, San Augustine and Tyler. We also review records for Chambers, Galveston, Harris and Liberty Counties in Texas, and Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes in Louisiana.

The format of the listing is Species – Date – County-and brief location information if available – (number) – Observer(s). If more precise location information is needed, it can often be obtained by using the bird species map feature to find the sighting in eBird, opening the checklist, and using the map function to display the location as precisely as the observer reported it.

Note that eBird is undertaking its annual taxonomy update in the last few days of October. The sightings listed below are based on the taxonomy and names accepted prior to this update. Thus, the Painted Restart is listed as such, not as a Painted Whitestart!

The notable repots this month, as usual for October, includes a few sightings of migrant species that are beyond the two weeks we "allow" for stragglers. There were half a dozen Yellow-billed Cuckoos seen in late October as well as three Great-crested Flycatchers. Several *Empidonax* flycatchers of several species were detected.

Species rare in their own right included a good number of Groove-billed Anis. Over the last few years, it has become clear that Allen's Hummingbirds are either more common locally in winter than previously realized or observers are being more careful in identifying "Rufous-type" hummingbirds or perhaps both. American Golden Plovers are typically very rare in our area in fall, so three widely separated sightings is significant.. The Green Kingfisher, the Fork-tailed Flycatcher, and the Black-throated Gray Warbler were all worthy of note.

We would note here that reports shown in this column may not have been reviewed, and may not be accepted into the permanent record..

Local Counties October 2026

Chimney Swift	Oct 28	HAI-John's Lake (2) Art McKinnon
American Golden Plover	Oct 26	JEF-Sear Rim SP mult obs
American Woodcock	Oct 23	HAI-Silsbee (1) Brian Adams
Limpkin	Oct 26	ORA-Joe Hopkins Park (4) Tony Frank
	Oct 28	HAI-John's Lake (1) Art McKinnon
	Oct 31	NEW-Newton (1) WE
Scaly-breasted Munia	Oct 26	HAI-Sour Lake (1) John Park
Veery	Oct 2	JEF-Sabine Woods (1) Jonathan Breaux
Painted Redstart	Oct 3-4	JEF-Sabine Woods (1) mult obs
Chestnut-sided Warbler	Oct 2	ORA-Japanese Ln (1) Tony Frank
Prairie Warbler	Oct 2	ORA-Japanese Ln (1) Tony Trank

Nearby Counties October 2026

Cinnamon Teal	Oct 2	CHA-J Nungaray NWR Shoveler Pond (1) continuing, mult obs
Snow Goose	Oct 1 on	GAL-Bliss Meadows Park Pasadena (1) continuing
Ross's Goose	Oct1 on	HAS-Copper Lakes Park (1) continuing
Cinnamon Teal	Oct 1 on	CHA-Jocelyn Nungaray NWR (1) Lisa Hardcastle
Common Ground-Dove	Oct 1 on	HAS-Bear Creek Park (1) Doug Fishman, Drew Dickert (1)

Groove-billed Ani

Oct thru 4 GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) mult obs
Oct 13 CAL-Nelson Rd (1) Andrew From, J G Miller
Oct 14 HAS-George Bush Park (1) George Voronetsky
Oct 18 CAM-Peveto Woods (1)Olivia Butler, Connor Gable, mult obs
Oct 18-29 HAS-San Jacinto Battleground (1) mult obs
Oct 21,28 GAL-Artist Boat Pres. (1) Jamie Schubert, Betty Dunn

Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Oct 23 HAS-Geo Bush Park (1) mult obs
Oct 24 Cypress Park (1) Randy Hanneman
Oct 25 HAS-Weekley Park (1) Sarah and Michael Kuzio
Oct 25 HAS-F M Law Park (1) Alexandria Aaron
Oct 28 CAL-Sam Houston Jones SP (1) Deanna Griggs
Oct 28 HAS-Lake Houston Wilderness Park (1) Richard Rulander. Andrew Hamlett
Oct 31 CAL-Bell City (1) Karthik Thrikkladeen. Vinay K L

E. Whip-poor-will	Oct 14	HAS-Buffalo Bayou Park (1) Mason Richards

	Oct 25	CHA-Mont Belvieu (1) Chad Logue
Allen's Hummingbird	Oct 1	HAS-John Paul Landing Park area (1) mult obs
	Oct 13	HAS-Bulbuls (1) KMJ Bird
	Oct 14-16	HAS-Rice Univ (1) Cin-Ty Lee, mult obs
	Oct 24	HAS-Longwing Landing Aquatic Ctr (1) KML Bird
Black-chinned Humm'bird	Oct 16	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Caleb Persia
Limpkin	Oct 15	ORA-Joe Hopkins Mem. Park (1) Nancy and Damien Martinez
Amer. Golden Plover	Oct 10	CHA-J Nungaray NWR (1) Hannah Von Sushi, Mark McDermott
	Oct 16	CAM-Sabine NWR Blue Goose Trl (1) Caleb Persia
	Oct 25	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Lou Fleischhauser
Upland Sandpiper	Oct 16	HAS-Braeswood (1) John O'Brien
	Oct 22	HAS-Nelson Farms (1) mult obs
American Woodcock	Oct 1-3	HAS-Jesse Jones Park (1) Debbie Beene, Megas Rosasrio
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Oct 1-3	GAL-Fort Travis Park (1) Paul Sivon
Swallow-tailed Kite	Oct 24	GAL-FM3005 (2) Alleen Morris
Franklin's Gull	Oct 24	CAL-Lk Charles Swimming Beach (1) Bill Finney
Gt Black-backed Gull	Oct 23	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Jamie Schubert
Iceland Gull (Thayer's)	Oct 28	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) WE

Black Tern

Oct 3 HAS-Morgan's Pt (1) Letha Slaigle
Oct 17 CHA. nr Trinity Riv Visitor Center (1) Isaac Boden, WE
Oct 19-27 CHA-J Nungaray NWR (3) mult obs
Oct 25 HAS-San Jacinto Battleground (1) Steve Rogow
Oct 26 HAS-High Is Smith Oaks (1) WE
Oct 30 HAS-Archbishop Fiorenza Park (1) mult obs

Wood Stork	Oct 30-31	HAS (up to 75) Archbishop Fiorenza Park (1) mult obs
Magnificent Frigatebird	Oct 17	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Andrew From
Brown Booby	Oct 27-29	CAL-Lake Charles Swimming Beach to Millenium Pk (1) mult obs
	Oct 27-28	CAM-Sabine Pass LA side (1) James Millsaps
	Oct 29-30	CHA-north Trinity Bay (6) Bruce Belson
Burrowing Owl	Oct 17	GAL-East End Lagoon (2) Bruce Aird, Ryan Shaw
	Oct 24-25	HAS-San Jacinto Battleground (1) mult obs
Green Kingfisher	Oct 25-28	HAS-Lake Houston Wilderness Park (1) mult obs
Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher	Oct 4	GAL-Dos Vacas Muertas (1) Donald Verser
Acadian Flycatcher	Oct1-10	HAS-Oct 25 GAL-Laftite's Cove (1) mult obs.
	Oct 5,10	HAS-Pine Brook Wetlands(1) Richard Rulander
	Oct 6	HAS-Johnson Space Ctr (1) Steven Berenzweig
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Oct 3	CAM-Willow Is (1) Paul Conover
Western Flycatcher	Oct 13	GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) mult obs
Say's Phoebe	Oct 16	CAM-Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge (1) Liana Van Zen

Ash-throated Flycatcher

Oct 19 CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Charlotte Chehotsky
Oct 17-18 GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) Carol Bell, WE
Oct 18 HAS-San Jacinto Battleground (1) Andew Hamlett, Richard Rulander
Oct 22-24 GAL-Galveston Is SP (1) mult obs
Oct 25 GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Margaet Peirce
Oct 30 GAL-Galveston Is SP (1) Lisa Hardcastle
Oct 30 GAL-Dos Vacas Muertes (1) Russlyn M

Gt Crested Flycatcher	Oct 15	LIB-southwest of Cleveland (1) Kevin Jackson
	Oct 22, 30	GAL-Dos Vacas Muertas (1) Dean Silvers
	Oct 24	GAL-Cypress (1) Robert Graham
	Oct 31	GAL-Lafitte;s Cove (1) K Kanerm, Ruth Dickerson
Great Kiskadee	Oct 1	CAM-Volunteer Ln Rookery (2) Kevin Leigh
	Oct 16	CAM-Volunteer Lane Rookery (2) Caleb Persia
	Oct 28	GAL-Rollover Pass to High Is (1) Mike Riley
Western Kingbird	Oct 31	CAM-Trosclair Rd (1) Vinay KL, Karthik Thrikkadeeri
Fork-tailed Flycatcher	Oct 1-3	CHA-J Nungaray NWR entrance rd (1) mult obs
Western Wood-Pewee	to Oct 1	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) mult obs
	Oct 17	CAM-Willow Is (1) Claire and Tom H
Bell's Vireo	Oct 3	CAM-Willow Is (1) Paul Conover
Veery	Oct 2	GAL-Market St/Ferry Rd area (1) Anon
Gray-cheeked Thrush	Oct 1	HAS-Pine Brook Wetlands (1) Vickie Miller
American Goldfinch	Oct 24-26	HAS-Cypress (1) Robert Graham. Alexandria Aaron
	Oct 20	HAS-Terry Hershey Park (1) Karen Miles
	Oct 24	HAS-Mulberry Park (1) Alexandria Aaron, Robert Graham
	Oct 25	GAL-Memorial Park Cemetery (20 WE
Dark-eyed Junco	Oct 17	CAM-Willow Is (1) Claire and Tom H
Western Meadowlark	Oct 23	HAS-J P Landing Park (1) Margarita Siboldi
	Oct 29	GAL-Hitchcock (1) Jamie Schubert
Orchard Oriole	Oct 17	HAS-Armand Bayou NC(1) John Berner, mult obs
Bullock's Oriole	Oct 18	HAS-San Jacinto Battleground (1) Richard Rulander, Andrew Hamlett
Golden-winged Warbler	Sep 30	HAS-Russ Pitman Park (1) mult obs
Lawrence's Warbler	Oct 1	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) (continuing Charlotte Chehotsky, mult obs
Mourning Warbler	Oct 16	HAS-Russ Pitman Park (1) James Rolfe
Cape May Warbler	Oct 1	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) continuing, Charlotte Chehotsky, mult obs
	thru Oct 3	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) continuing Paul Sivon, mult obs
	Oct 18	HI Smith Oaks (1) WE
Yellow-rump (Audubon's)	Oct 29	HAS-Bella Vista Neighborhood (1) Judy Behrens
Prairie Warbler	Oct 18-30	HAS-Battleground Golf Course (10 mult obs
Black-thr. Gray Warbler	Oct 28	GAL-Dos Vacas Muertes (1) Paul Sivon
Scarlet Tanager	Oct 20	ORA-Claiborne West Park (10 Tony frank
Black-headed Grosbeak	Oct 3	CHA-Cotton Lake Rd (1) Paul Fagala
	Oct 31	HAS-Armand Bayou NC (1) Richard Rulander, Andrew Hamlett

Abbreviations used: ANG – Angelina County;; CAL – Calcasieu Parish, LA; CAM – Cameron Parish, LA; CHA – Chambers County; GAL – Galveston County; HAI – Hardin County; HAS – Harris County; HI – High Island; JAS – Jasper County; JAW – John Whittle; JEF – Jefferson County; LIB – Liberty County; NEW – Newton County; ORA – Orange County; PI – Pleasure Island, Port Arthur; SAA – San Augustine County. SAB – Sabine County; SM – Steve Mayes, SRSP - Sea Rim State Park; SW – Sabine Woods; TP – Tyrrell Park including Cattail Marsh; TYL – Tyler County; WE – Wyatt Egelhoff; WJC – West Jefferson County.

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The Texas-wide Rare Bird Alert, maintained by Houston Audubon Society, is available on their web-site at **http://www.houstonaudubon.org/** Email alerts are also available for a fee.

Many rare bird sightings in Texas are posted on Facebook Texbirds or on the TEXBIRDS listserv. Archives of the listserv are at **www.freelists.org/archive/texbirds.** It is not necessary to subscribe to view the archives, which include all recent postings.

Detailed information/maps on birding sites in Texas is available on the Web at **http://www.texasbirds.org/birdingLocations.php**. This leads you to the maps of the various eBird hotspots. You can also subscribe (free) on eBird for email alerts for all rare birds reported in a specific county.